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By Harold P. Preston

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T. S. Denison & Company, Publishers

623 S. Wabash Ave.

CHICAGO

THE ELOPEMENT

A ONE-ACT FARCE

BY

HAROLD P. PRESTON



CHICAGO
T. S. DENISON & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS .

PS635
Z9P834

N O T I C E

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THE ELOPEMENT

CHARACTERS.

MARJORY FLEMING.....*The Wife*
REGINALD ADAMS.....*The Other Man*
JACK FLEMING.....*The Husband*

PLACE—*Any Large City.*

SCENE—*The Flemings' Apartment.*

TIME—*The Present.*

TIME OF PLAYING—*About Twenty Minutes.*

TYPES AND COSTUMES

MARJORY—A young woman of persuasive charm. Wears an attractive gown that does not diminish her comeliness.

REGINALD—The English "Berty" type; small and dapper. Wears cutaway coat, gray trousers and spats, silk hat and monocle, and carries a cane. Has a gun in his pocket.

JACK—The usual business man type, preferably of large physique. Business clothes. Has a gun with a blank load in his pocket.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

Up stage means away from footlights; *down stage*, near footlights. In the use of *right* and *left*, the actor is supposed to be facing the audience.

THE ELOPEMENT

SCENE: *A well-furnished living room. A door at the right leads to the entrance hall. A door up left leads to a closet, and another door in the left wall, but down nearer the audience, leads to the kitchenette. A fireplace is in the right wall, down stage. In the center of the room is a table, with two chairs. A plate of sandwiches is on the table. In the drawer of this table is a revolver, with blank load. Against the rear wall, left of center, is a costumer or hat rack, upon which hang a cane and hat belonging to REGINALD, and a hat belonging to MARJORY. Between the two left doors is a small table or stand.*

A few bars of "Home, Sweet Home" may be played to raise the curtain, or the curtain may rise without music.

At rise, REGINALD and MARJORY are on the stage. REGINALD is seated at the right of the center table. MARJORY is standing back of the table, feeding him a sandwich. As REGINALD is biting into the sandwich, he jumps suddenly to his feet.

MARJORY. What is the matter, Reggie? You nearly bit my hand off.

REGINALD. So sorry, dear. Did you hear a noise? (*Looks about.*)

MARJORY. Oh, Reggie, you're tiresome. All you do is hear noises. Haven't I told you that Jack won't be back until Monday?

REGINALD (*looking around apprehensively*). He might have forgotten his collar button. (*Goes to door right as if looking for something.*)

MARJORY. Nonsense!

REGINALD (*turning, partly reassured and coming down center*). Husbands a'ways come back in the motion pictures. Perhaps they have a psychic sense.

MARJORY. You haven't even *psychic* sense. We're as safe as if we were in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean—

REGINALD (*lifelessly*). Ah, that's encouraging.

MARJORY (*crossing to REGINALD, and putting her arms about him eagerly*). But there's only one way we can be permanently safe, dear.

REGINALD (*showing consternation, and removing her arms*). Permanently safe?

MARJORY. We can elope!

REGINALD (*starting back in alarm*). Oh, I say! I didn't come prepared for an elopement. I haven't my toothbrush or anything.

MARJORY. You don't need a toothbrush to elope with. All you need is love and—someone else.

REGINALD. But I can't brush my teeth with love. Perhaps some other time we might arrange it. (*Looks around nervously, as if wanting to escape.*)

MARJORY (*advancing toward him*). There will be no other time. It's now or never!

REGINALD (*retreating quickly*). I tell you the thing is impossible, Marjory. My wife and child would object strenuously if I were to elope with you.

MARJORY. That is no bar to our elopement.

REGINALD (*hopefully*). Did you say "bar"?

MARJORY. I am the new woman!

REGINALD. You don't look so terribly new, dear.

MARJORY. I take what I cannot get. If you will not clope with me of your own free will, I shall abduct you! (*Advances as if to embrace him.*)

REGINALD (*retreating as far as possible*). Not that—not that. Anything you say, dear.

MARJORY (*cooingly*). There's a dear, good boy. I knew you were dying to run away with me all the time. Now run into the closet and get my suitcase. It's all packed.

(REGINALD *goes to door up left, and exits*. MARJORY *puts on her hat*. REGINALD *returns, dragging a suitcase that is so heavy he can barely lift it.*)

REGINALD. I say, dear, what have you got in here?

MARJORY. Just a few clothes.

REGINALD. One would never think that women's clothes could weigh so much. There seems to be so little to them. I say, old dear, how long is this elopement going to last?

MARJORY (*turns as she goes toward right door*). How long is it going to last?

REGINALD. Yes, when are we coming back?

MARJORY. We aren't coming back.

REGINALD (*dropping the suitcase*). Good heavens! What will my family say when they find this out?

MARJORY. They should be grateful to me for taking you off their hands. Come now, dear, don't dawdle. (*She goes to right door. REGINALD picks up suitcase and takes hat from hat rack. A doorbell rings off right. REGINALD drops the suitcase with a crash. He and MARJORY look at each other, petrified with fright.*)

REGINALD (*starting for right door*). I must be going now, dear. Toodle-oo.

MARJORY (*tragically, holding him back*). You can't go. It's Jack!

REGINALD (*starts again*). That's why I'm going.

MARJORY (*thrusting him back violently*). He'll kill you if he finds you here. He's insanely jealous.

REGINALD. Hang his sanity. I'm no alienist. I've got to escape.

(*The doorbell rings furiously.*)

MARJORY. Quick! The dumbwaiter!

REGINALD. Ripping!

(*The bell continues ringing. MARJORY removes her hat, and pushes the suitcase under the table between the doors at left. REGINALD appears stupefied.*)

MARJORY. Hurry, Reggie. I can't give you much time. (*Starts to push him through door down left. Sees plate of sandwiches, picks it up and shoves it into his hand. Hurriedly pushes him off stage.*)

REGINALD (*as he disappears*). I told you he'd come back. They always do in the movies. (MARJORY *exits quickly, right*. REGINALD *sticks head from kitchenette, then re-enters*.) The dumbwaiter's locked! I wonder— (Crosses quickly to right door, and listens. Draws gun from pocket and examines it as he re-crosses to door up left, leading to closet, where he exits quickly.)

JACK *enters from the right, followed by MARJORY*.

JACK. Well, dear, I'm back sooner than I expected. (*Tosses hat on center table, and takes her roughly in his arms*.) Miss me much?

MARJORY (*struggling to get away*). Oh, Jack, you're mussing me horribly. (*Crosses left of table*.)

JACK (*going down right of table*). Got a wire from the man I was going to see which made it unnecessary to make the trip. Say, Marjory, I'm hungry. Guess I'll go in the kitchenette and rummage around. (*Starts for door down left*.)

MARJORY (*intercepting him*). Oh, there isn't a thing there, Jack.

JACK. Why, there was some cold tongue and ham there when I left this morning.

MARJORY. I ate them both.

JACK. Good Lord! You must have had some appetite. There was about a pound of the two.

MARJORY. Yes, I was fearfully hungry from cleaning house this morning.

JACK. Why, this was your music lesson morning.

MARJORY (*confused*). It was—but I couldn't go. The icebox was leaking, and I had to stay in until the plumber came to fix it.

JACK. Well, I'll just go and see what I can find. (*Starts again*.)

MARJORY (*coaxingly and flustered*). I'll get you something, dear.

JACK (*good naturedly*). Don't bother. I'll wait on myself. (*Starts to cross. Sees REGINALD'S cane on costumer*.)

Goes over and takes it down. Turning.) Hello, what's this?

MARJORY (*agitated*). A cane.

JACK. So it seems. What's it doing here?

MARJORY. I—I—was using it.

JACK. It doesn't belong to me.

MARJORY (*lamely*). No. The—plumber—left it here.

JACK (*coming down*). So plumbers carry canes nowadays, do they?

MARJORY. This was a most unusual plumber.

JACK. So I suspect. (*Starts for kitchenette. Sees suitcase. Picks it up and faces MARJORY, who shows fear.*) You were planning to run away with a man!

MARJORY. He's not exactly a man.

JACK. Don't lie to me, woman!

MARJORY (*crying*). Jack, you are wronging me cruelly with this terrible suspicion. (*Loud sneeze from closet up left.*)

JACK. Ha, ha! Suspicion, bosh! What's a sneeze doing in that closet if you're as innocent as you pretend? Your lover is hiding in there. I'm going to have him out! (*Going to door up left, calls loudly.*) Come out of there! (*REGINALD enters quickly.*) Good Lord, betrayed for that! (*Crosses center.*)

REGINALD (*adjusting his monocle*). Warm day, rather.

JACK (*coming toward him threateningly*). It's going to be hot—for you. What were you doing in that closet?

REGINALD (*confidently*). Hunting moths, old dear.

JACK (*disgusted*). Hunting moths?

REGINALD (*brightly*). You grasp it, old chappy. I'm a professional moth-hunter. I came here to find a certain moth that Mrs. Fleming had seen about the apartment.

JACK. That's a clever alibi. Is this your cane? (*Pokes REGINALD in the ribs.*)

REGINALD (*gasping, takes cane*). Yes; thanks awfully.

JACK (*sneeringly*). So you're a plumber, too, are you?

MARJORY (*quickly*). Yes, this gentleman is the plumber.

REGINALD (*looking bewildered*). Plumber? (*Catches MARJORY'S eye.*) Oh, yes; I'm the jolly old plumber. Righto!

JACK. A moth-hunting plumber!

REGINALD. You have it. Really Mr. Fleming, you're awfully bright, even though you don't look it. I should just love to stay here and chat with you, if I had the leisure, but I really must be going. (*Starts for door right.*)

MARJORY. The icebox is quite all right now, is it?

REGINALD (*stopping*). Quite. I fixed the carburetor and put a new shoe on the left foreleg. (*Starts again.* JACK stops him sharply.)

JACK. That's enough of this talk. You can't get away with anything like that. I've got you two now, and you're not going to slip away from me as easily as this. What do you mean, you imitation man, by making love to my wife?

REGINALD (*embarrassed*). But I say, you know, she made all the love.

MARJORY. Wretch!

JACK. She did, did she? So much the worse.

REGINALD. That's what I thought. It has always seemed bad form to me for a woman to make the advances. Now, when my aunt—

JACK (*roughly*). We haven't time to listen to your family history. See here. Do you want her?

REGINALD. Really, my dear fellow, you distress me immensely. I have one wife already.

JACK. That makes no difference to-day. Add another to your collection.

MARJORY. How noble you are, Jack, not to stand in the way of my happiness.

JACK (*savagely, to REGINALD*). But you've got to fight for her!

REGINALD (*nervously*). Oh, I'm not at all athletic.

JACK. I didn't mean that I was going to spank you. We'll fight with guns. (*Taking gun from pocket.*) Here's yours. I'll get another.

REGINALD (*taking gun*). Good Lord—this is an arsenal!

MARJORY (*throwing her arms around JACK*). Oh, Jack, you can't do this thing. It's murder!

JACK. He's got twice as much to shoot at as I have. (*Brushes her aside. Gets gun from drawer in center table.*)

MARJORY (*at left*). Can't you be big and noble and stand out of my way?

REGINALD (*down right; eagerly*). Yes, that would be the splendid thing to do, you know. Just step aside and—

JACK (*at center*). Step up and take your position.

REGINALD. I'll take under the table, if you don't object.

MARJORY (*wringing her hands*). Oh, this is terrible! How can I stop it?

JACK. You can't stop it. You started it. Now you must go through with it.

MARJORY. Be brave, Reggie, for my sake.

REGINALD (*feebly*). Yes, dear.

JACK. Marjory, you will count three. At the word three, we turn and fire.

REGINALD (*adjusting his monocle*). At least I'll die in full armor.

JACK. Now take your position. (*He crosses left and stands facing wall.*) Now, Marjory. (*REGINALD crosses right and faces wall; leans stick against fireplace or wall.*)

MARJORY (*up center*). Oh, Jack. I can't. I can't!

JACK. Shut up! Count!

MARJORY (*counts slowly; REGINALD in comic terror during counting*). One—two—three! (*Covers her face with hands. Men turn and fire. JACK falls. MARJORY uncovers her face, and sees JACK; horrified.*) You've killed him.

REGINALD (*opens eyes slowly*). Am I dead?

MARJORY (*going quickly to him, and shaking him*). Did you hear what I said? You've killed him. Good Heavens, Reggie, it's murder in the first degree!

REGINALD (*weakly*). Are there degrees of murder?

MARJORY. Quick; get your wits together, fool! (*Shak-*

ing him furiously.) The police may be here any minute. You've got to escape.

REGINALD (*nervously*). This is a beastly mess. I'll run along, then. (*Starts for door right.*)

MARJORY (*detaining him*). You coward! Are you going to run away and leave me alone with the dead body of my husband?

REGINALD (*carelessly*). Oh, I'll send the police around to you.

MARJORY. And have them arrest *me* as the murderer? We will both escape. But I must have money.

REGINALD (*fumbling in pocket*). Here's a quarter. That's all I have with me.

MARJORY. Don't be a fool. You have your check book?

REGINALD. Yes.

MARJORY. Give me a check for five thousand dollars.

REGINALD. Good Lord, Marjory. That's a lot of money.

MARJORY. It's worth anything to escape, isn't it?

REGINALD. I hadn't figured it was worth so much to *me* for you to escape. (*Crosses to right of center table. Sits down, takes out check book; writes.*)

MARJORY (*following him*). You heartless wretch! I see you for the first time in your true colors. You would desert me, my husband dead, without a penny in the world. You may go, if that is the way you feel about it.

REGINALD (*at center table writing*). Every naught is a drop of blood. It's a big price to pay for killing a man you didn't know. (*Rising and handing MARJORY the check.*) I was only jesting, dear. Here's your check. Things can never be the same after this. Can you forgive me for bringing this terrible tragedy upon you? I've been an ass.

MARJORY. You have—and I do. I forgive you everything. But go—go— (*She crosses to JACK's body. Kneels, her face buried in her hands.* REGINALD *exits right quick-*

ly. *Slight pause.* MARJORY and JACK *laugh and rise.*) Bob, you sure put that over great.

(Sound of police whistle heard off stage, in distance.)

JACK *(dusting his clothes).* Sure I did. I'm some actor, if I do say it myself. Say, Mayme, you'd better cash that check at once. Hang it all, this is Saturday. We can't do nothin' till Monday.

MARJORY *(at center).* 'Aw, whadda we care, Bob? We'll be miles away from here by Monday.

JACK *(crossing to her).* A good haul, old girl. *(Exultingly.)* Five thousand bucks! That'll pay for a good many joy rides, eh, kid? *(They embrace.)*

REGINALD *appears at right doorway.*

REGINALD *(sternly).* Sorry to mar such a charming scene, but I'd rather see your hands in the air than around each other's necks. *(He has them covered with a gun.)* Put them up! Now come over here with your hands up. *(As they cross toward the door he takes center.)* This gun's got real bullets. I've had my eye on you for some time. You're a pretty clever team, but I guess my single is the feature act to-day. As for joy rides, you'll find a free one waiting for you outside. *(JACK and MARJORY exeunt right, slowly with upraised hands. REGINALD follows, keeping them covered with his gun.)* Get a move on!

CURTAIN.

Gettin' Acquainted

BY

GEORGIA EARLE

QUAINT, small-town comedy in 1 act; 1 male, 2 females. Time, 25 minutes. Scene: A New England sitting room. Played for three years by the talented authoress herself, on the Keith and Orpheum circuits; in New York, Chicago, Toronto, San Francisco, New Orleans and cities in between, it struck a new note in vaudeville and has been compared with "The Old Homestead," Mary E. Wilkins' stories, etc.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

Jane Stewart.....A Spinster
Priscilla Stewart.....Her Sister, Also a Spinster
John Purdy.....A Wooer for Fifteen Years

All have heard of men who courted for years and did not "pop"; most communities can furnish living examples. The idea has never been used before with such clever and sprightly results. Honest, slow-thinking, yet withal determined John Purdy had spent 15 years just gettin' acquainted with the Stewart sisters, Jane and Priscilla. Finally Jane "goes and gets herself engaged" to another man but decides to bring matters to a focus for Priscilla. She determines to "make it snappy" and poor old John is "railroaded" into camp. Splendid lines and "business" so unusually clever as to place it almost in a class by itself among one-act plays. Like most talented creations, its simplicity commends it; well adapted to amateur presentation. Very minute directions for staging, acting and "business." Four excellent half-tone reproductions of scenes.

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Mary's Millions

BY

FREDERICK G. JOHNSON

A RURAL COMEDY in 3 acts; 5 males, 6 females, extras optional. Time, 2 hours. Scenes: 1 interior, 1 exterior.

CHARACTERS.

Jack Henderson.....A Civil Engineer
Jimmie Barnes.....His Friend from New York
Ezra Stoneham.....The Village Storekeeper
Abija Boggs.....A Human Flivver
Victor de Selles.....An Imported Product
Jane Stoneham.....Ezra's Better Half
Eudora Smith.....The Stoneham's Hired Girl
Lola de Selles.....Victor's Sister
Mrs. Mudge.....Wedded to Her Ouija Board
Betty Barlow.....A Country School Teacher
Mary Manners.....An Heiress to Millions
Members of the Choir.

"When I go after a side partner, she's going to be a live-wire lady. No corn-fed beauties for mine." "Say—honest—is there anybody in this one-horse town that has a million dollars?" "I've read books, I have, about them slick rascals from the city." "Waitin' for the mail? Looks more like waitin' for the female." "More city folks, I'll bet a doughnut." "I believe in sperrits, but I ain't seen none sense the country went dry." "Stop scratchin'! Ain't you got no company manners?" "He looks like a head waiter and he talks like a bottle of seltzer." "All foreign wild animals looks alike to me." "The greatest doin's since the mill dam busted." "What's been swiped an' who done it?" "Any clues? No, all genuine pearls." "She has chain lightning slowed down like the rural free delivery." "I foller the deeductive method. I don't take no clues off no Fiji board!" "Boy, I sure do hate to take you, but I reckon I got to." "Funny what a difference just a few millions make." "The third degree trimmed with hayseed." "Eudory, you say the durndest things!"

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CHICAGO

Whose Little Bride Are You?

BY

EDITH ELLIS

A FARCE Comedy, in 3 acts; 5 males, 5 females. Time, 2½ hours. **Scene:** 1 handsomely furnished living room. This play was written by the author of "Mary Jane's Pa" and other nation-wide successes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

Dr. Benjamin Bellows. A Sentimental Retired Physician
Algernon Clawhammer...His Prospective Son-In-Law
Augustus May.....His Butler
Simeon Singleton.....His Old Friend
George Tobin.....His Prospective Step-Son
Florence Bellows.....His Charming Daughter
Mrs. MacEckron.....His Neighbor
Dolly MacEckron.....Her Daughter
Maggie Brady.....The Maid
Mrs. Amelia Tobin.....The Bride-To-Be

At the beginning one potential bride is visible; before the final curtain the woods, so to speak, are full of them. The brides range in assortment from the little flapper not yet out of her teens, to the seasoned 200-pound campaigner who has worn the orange blossoms no less than four times. Matrimonial pairing proceeds even to the butler and the housemaid. Mistaken identity furnishes an unusual measure of complications until it actually becomes a problem as to which little bride is which, or who. Plot, situations and dialogue dovetail perfectly. The incidents are as humorous and rapid-fire as ever went into a play. It is especially adapted to amateurs, the parts being so vividly characterized and the action so continuous that the piece virtually carries itself.

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CHICAGO

Fifty-Fifty

BY

FREDERICK G. JOHNSON

A FARCE of love, luck and laughter in 3 acts, by the author of "Mary's Millions"; 5 males, 5 females. Time, 2¼ hours. Scenes: 2 interiors, an attic studio and a bungalow.

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY.

Henry Brown	An Artist
Paul Green	An Author
Patrick O'Malley	A Janitor
Smudge	A Valet
Cap'	A Wanderer
Mrs. Podge.....	A Landlady
Sophie Bland.....	A Dancer
May Dexter.....	An Enthusiast
Mrs. Hawley.....	A Collector
Josephine	A Seeker

If there be a moral to this merry comedy of complications, it is that it is possible to get too much of a good thing. Paul and Henry are struggling to achieve fame and bread-and-butter money in literature and art. Utter failure is their lot until one of Henry's paintings, accidentally displayed upside down, is enthusiastically purchased by an art collector, and the "impressionistic painter" becomes the talk of the town. Paul, following the hunch, writes his stories backward, and success follows swiftly. But some innocent fibs, told for reasons of necessity, reach the newspapers, and the pals find themselves headed straight for trouble. Their love affairs go awry, and in the predicaments which follow as a result of their propensity for spinning yarns, they find success an empty thing. A woman who claims to be Paul's wife, an elusive vanishing painting, a mysterious sea-faring man, a meddling landlady, all contribute to the mixup. Of course it all comes out happily.

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Denison's Royalty Plays

AND HOME CAME TED

By Walter Ben Hare. Comedy in 3 acts; 6 males, 6 females; 2¼ hours. Royalty, ten dollars. Price, 50 Cents.

ASSISTED BY SADIE

By Walter Ben Hare. Comedy in 4 acts; 6 males, 6 females; 2½ hours. Royalty, ten dollars. Price, 50 Cents.

BETTY'S LAST BET

By Edith Ellis. Farce-comedy in 3 acts; 5 males, 6 females; 2½ hours. Royalty, twenty dollars. Price, 50 Cents.

FIFTY-FIFTY

By Frederick G. Johnson. Farce in 3 acts; 5 males, 5 females; 2¼ hours. Royalty, fifteen dollars. Price, 50 Cents.

FOR THE LOVE OF JOHNNY

By Harry Hamilton. Play in 3 acts; 6 females, 3 females; 2¼ hours. Royalty, ten dollars. Price, 50 Cents.

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By Walter Ben Hare. Comedy in 4 acts; 7 males, 7 females; 2¼ hours. Royalty, fifteen dollars. Price, 50 Cents.

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By Georgia Earle. Comedy in 1 act; 2 males, 2 females. Time, 30 minutes. Royalty, five dollars. Price, 35 Cents.

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